THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir. No concrete proposal in this regard is under consideration of the Government. However, alternative methods of providing income support to the farmers are being examined to ensure that the farmers get the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Storage and Movement of Essential Commodities

813. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to lift control on storage and movement of essential commodities like wheat, paddy etc; and

(b) if so, the details of the new policy in this regard and what would be its impact on availability and retail prices of these commodities throughtout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government has issued an Order under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 allowing dealers to freely buy, stock, sell, transport, distribute etc., any quantity in respect of wheat, paddy/rice, coarse grains, sugar, edible oilseeds and edible oils without requiring a permit or license therefor under any order issued under the Act. The Order will take effect after thirty days form the date of its issue(15.2.2002) notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any Order made by a State Government before the commencement of the Order. It is expected that this would enable farmers to get best prices for their produce, achieve price stability and ensure better availability of foodgrains in deficit areas.

Restoration of Rationing System in Kerala

814. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government consider to restore the Uuniversal Rationing System in Kerala;